

The Mission of Freethought

**Iconoclastic Work is Necessary to Clear
Man's Mind From Superstitious Faith
Before the Seeds of True Knowl-
edge Can be Sown.**

(By J. C. Watkins.)

The primary objects of freethought propaganda are to encourage independent thinking, to insist upon the right of expression and to seek and promulgate the truth. In pursuing these objects it is found necessary to be somewhat iconoclastic and to show that many of the things popularly believed by the people are erroneous, superstitious and mythical.

The minds of people must first be cleared of the mists and fogs of error and superstition before they are in condition for the reception of true knowledge. Among what we believe to be erroneous notions that are held by many people are the inspiration, infallibility and truth of the bible; the so-called plan of salvation; the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth; the idea of heaven and hell as taught by the church, and in reference to the existence of a personal god. We claim that these teachings of theology and the church are not well supported by evidences that appeal to intelligent reason.

It has been pointed out time and again that the bible which is offered as authority for these beliefs is either not understood or is not trustworthy in all respects.

It (the bible) is evidently a human production, so that it does not tell us any more about things that are outside the pale of human knowledge than can intelligent men who are living now.

The so-called plan of salvation does not commend itself to the intelligence of this age because it makes salvation depend upon faith, belief, or trust, rather than upon merit, and earnest endeavor. Like aristocracy, it depends upon the accidents of birth and environment rather than character and conduct. It is true they say "salvation is free," "only believe," and you shall be saved, but it depends upon ones ability to believe or to exercise faith, which is a gift of god, that is upon an ability we may not have and upon the possession of something we do not possess and can not get until it is given to us. If we have not faith and the ability to believe what is necessary to salvation whose fault is it? If the faith or belief required were in something tangible and reasonable then we

might be censurable for not believing—but this is not the case. We are asked and expected to believe contrary to the evidences of our natural senses and to our own experiences.

Jesus of Nazareth, admitting that he lived at the time it is claimed that he did, and that he said and did some of the things recorded in the gospels, was a human being, probably a good-meaning, earnest man, one who had the courage of his convictions, and who died a martyr in defence of what he believed to be true. As such he is entitled to the admiration, love and respect of everyone, and if he were living on earth today freethinkers would be among his best friends.

As regards the existence of a personal deity, the immortality of the soul, and of future rewards and punishments, no one can speak with authority. These ideas cannot be proven nor absolutely disproven, therefore it cannot be so very wrong for people to say they do not believe them. If they do not and cannot believe them, of course we may speculate and theorize about these questions all we like, but we must not assume that because we believe things they are necessarily true.

It is by this speculating and theorizing about the unknown that truth is discovered. Most that we know now about the universe, nature, natural law, and about man has been learned by research and investigation, thought and human experience. We must expect that most of the knowledge that we shall continue to acquire will come in the same way.

It is science and not revelation that will solve the riddle of the universe and discover what that something we call god is and what the destiny of the human race is to be.

Kanahwa Falls. W. Va.

FREETHOUGHT PICNIC.

**Ohio Patriots Enjoy Happy Day and Take
Action Upon Subject of Free-
thought Funerals.**

(By Pres. Geo. O. Roberts.)

The members of Club No. 1, of The Buckeye Secular Union held their first picnic, at the home of J. W. White, in Midvale, O., July 4th, E. M. 309, and we certainly had a royal time.

A large tent had been erected on the

lawn in rear of the house, where the tables were set and from the appearance of the great piles of cakes, pies, chicken, sandwiches and cold ham, also the strong lemonade, hot coffee, preserves, salads and ice cream the members must have thought the picnickers would eat some and I guess they were right for we surely did eat and drink to our entire satisfaction.

I might mention however with one exception, and that was in the case of Harry L. Hostetler, who is somewhat like Mrs. Eliza Mowry Bliven or Parker H. Sercombe, who only eat when they have to and not when they want to, perhaps. Mr. Narragon, cautioned Mr. Toomey "to be careful as he was not used to such high living and might have night horse. Of course it is different with Phillip Zeigler and my self for we got used to it in the army." Brother White had chairs for 60 but only half that number put in appearance; some letters of regret read, many having other engagements for the Fourth, some saying we had it on the wrong day; well those present thought that the Fourth of July was a child of Washington, Franklin, Paine and Jefferson, all of whom were Freethinkers and who in their wisdom gave us a constitution minus any hocus pocus and from the way the churches are losing power, the day is not far distant, when the Fourth will be for Freethinkers altogether.

I think I can say without any hesitation, that it was the best picnic we were ever at and that, everyone was happy and hoped we would have many more.

During the afternoon a committee was appointed who drew up the following, which was unanimously adopted, with request to be printed:

Whereas, It has occurred in many instances, that, Freethinkers have been buried from the church or residence, with church services conducted by a preacher or other religious person in opposition to the wishes of the deceased, and with the view of carrying out the desires of dead Freethinkers, we offer the following:

Resolved: First, When a member of the Buckeye Secular Union or other Freethinker dies, and so desires, the Buckeye Secular Union, shall take charge of the funeral and conduct the service in accordance with the Freethought forms and request of the deceased. Second: The President or other person shall read a sketch, prepared by the deceased, of his life, after which members and friends will be called on to speak and to close with an oration, from some one selected by the deceased, with music and singing as requested.

SAMUEL TOOMEY,
HARRY L. HOSTETLER,
GEO. O. ROBERTS,
Committee.